RiseVT-Windham County

LOOKING BACK AT 2019

WHERE WE WORK: TOWNSHEND, GUILFORD, NEWFANE, & VERNON To select the towns in which to launch our county efforts, we look at certain demographics, household income, nutrition intake, and health outcomes, as well as readiness. We work with our stakeholder group to assess need based on this data and readiness based on qualitative interviews. These launch towns were selected to bring resources to rural communities outside of Brattleboro, pairing two sets of towns that compliment each other’s needs and readiness.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED:
AHS Field Director, Blueprint, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital-Clinical OneCare Vermont, Brattleboro Retreat, Grace Cottage Hospital, Groundworks, HCRS, Hunger Free Vermont Hunger Council of Windham County, SASH/Brattleboro Housing, Senior Solutions, United Way, Vermont Department of Health, Winston Prouty

WE WORK ACROSS SECTORS

BUSINESSES
Improving wellness policies, increasing healthy food options, encouraging movement, and making worksites breastfeeding friendly.

SCHOOLS
Improving wellness policies, bringing mindfulness to classrooms, encouraging school meals best practices, and launching walk-to-school days.

MUNICIPALITIES
Improving town policies, enlisting civic engagement, making towns more walkable, and increasing healthy food access.

MEET YOUR LOCAL RISEVT LEADER

ELISHA UNDERWOOD

Elisha Underwood is the Program Manager for RiseVT-Windham County, bringing the RiseVT model to much of the population served by Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. Elisha comes to RiseVT with extensive experience in community health, most recently as a member of the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH) Community Health Team. Elisha received an Associate’s degree at Community College of Vermont and a BS at Keene State College, majoring in Health Science with a specialization in Health Promotion & Wellness and focus in Community Health. Before starting at BMH, Elisha worked at a non-profit raising awareness of wellness and proper role modeling among young athletes, and one promoting healthy lifestyle choices within a residential facility.
Amplify Grants distributed in Townshend, Guilford, Newfane, & Vernon. Each funded initiative ties into at least one of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention 24 Strategies to Prevent Overweight & Obesity.

Total grant funds distributed to infuse healthcare reform funds into Townshend, Guilford, Newfane, & Vernon, increasing opportunities to embrace healthy lifestyles where Vermonter live, work, learn, & play.

The Windham RiseVT Program Manager led 8 projects over the past year. The projects collectively served the entire spectrum of ages, from prenatal women to older Vermonters. These projects have crossed multiple sectors, including schools, municipalities, worksites, and several were community-wide initiatives. Several included enhancing nutrition programming for children, while others included community engagement activities and promoting wellness related policy changes.

RiseVT-Windham County awarded an amplify grant to Guilford Central School to design and create a sensory garden. The plants in the garden provide the students and the community with opportunities to engage their senses, reducing stress and welcoming them into the learning environment of the school. This project re-utilizes an unused space in front of the Guilford Central School by creating a sensory welcome garden with the assistance of the pre-k classroom, the farm-to-school program, local garden designer, and the RiseVT-Windham County Program Manager. The sensory welcome garden includes a wide variety of plants that engage all senses, a walking path with descriptive and welcoming signs, and other calming features such as a bench and student-painted rocks. This project uses a well-known local garden designer who is an expert in creating intentional, sustainable spaces. RiseVT funding purchased plants and a stipend for the designer for planning, designing, and gardening. The Guilford community donated composted manure and lime, stepping stones, handmade signs and a bench with an arbor.